

A New Approach to Online Reputation Management in Tourism

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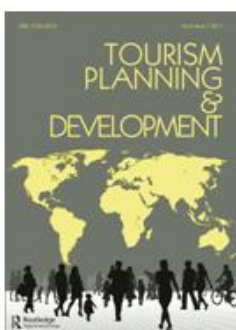
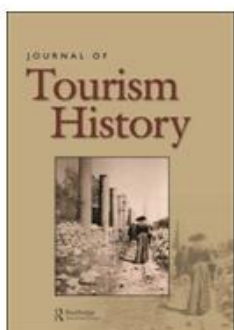
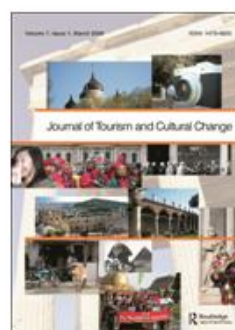
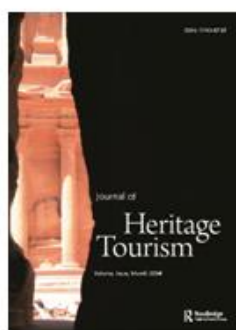


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Co-production of a co-creative leisure: the social game Restaurant City on Facebook

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The exponential increase in recreational use of social networks place the phenomenon as a matter of social and economic interest (Nielsen, 2009). Facebook, the leading social network in the world, sets up its success on social casual games (Di Loreto and Gouaich, 2011) that recreate a business idea that in some cases belongs to the tourism and hospitality sector (hotels, bars, restaurants, theme parks or shopping malls) where social interaction and the development of the so called “golden machanics” (pushing the user to repeat the same actions several times a day) constitute the foundation of social game’s success (Buckman, Rebecca, and Forbes, 2009). Despite the social and economic importance of social games on Internet, the phenomenon is poorly studied. This research aims to describe the social activity that occurs between individuals within the players community of Restaurant City on Facebook and contribute to point out some applications for tourism and hospitality sector.

We designed a netnography, a virtual ethnography (Kozinets, 1998, 2002, 2010), to study the social processes that configure the player's community in Restaurant City. Data was obtained from (1) the immersion of a researcher in a 38 users online community where was made an online and offline participant observation, (2) conducting an online focus group on Facebook with the six most experienced players in the community of study and (3) monitoring the interactions between game developers and users through the Community section (Fanpage, Blog and Forum). Finally, we used EdEt a CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software) for data analysis.

The results describe different forms of access, motivation, identity production, game's social organization, cooperation - competition and co-production that happen in the game. Unlike traditional social games, online interaction takes place without individual's physical presence, with almost perfect information and a relevant role in co-production of the experience, and the co-creation of the game by the player (Ritzer 2009; Ritzer & Jurgenson 2010). The analysis of the dynamic among the community in the game Restaurant City point out that, in social networks, game and interaction open a new path for innovation, customer relationship and value development obtained directly from customers. This new business environment created by web 2.0 is a challenge and an opportunity that goes beyond digital leisure sector to be implemented by tourism and hospitality firms such as the recent action on Facebook –*The Social Suit*- by Meliá Hotels International.

social web, leisure, social casual games, leisure spaces, social interaction, Facebook

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Networks of small tourism actors going online: the case of the “Innovative Experiences” network

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The aim of this research is to contribute to the understanding of the online presence of small tourism actors.

“Web 2.0” technologies can play a central role in tourism. In particular, social media allow communication in an easy, inexpensive and flexible way, and, as a consequence, they can be critically important for small actors. When actively used, social media can contribute to the development and management of cooperative groups. Users of social media can engage in different online activities. The present research is focused on the use of social media by formal networks of small tourism actors. The research question is:

- Why, how and with which result do formal networks of small tourism actors use social media?

An empirical investigation was conducted in the form of a case study regarding the use of a specific social network (Facebook) by the “Innovative Experiences” network of Norwegian tourism actors. Facebook was selected because of its popularity, while the network was selected due to its explicit commitment concerning the use of social media. The data were collected through interviews and virtual observations.

The results show that the network object of study uses Facebook in order to communicate with the members and stimulate the use of modern technologies. A relative intense online activity is performed by the network’s leaders and some members. The observed online interactions are limited in terms of the content and the degree of two-ways communication. The online communication is characterized by a varied form and a friendly and positive tone.

Based on the case study, the main result of the use of Facebook is identified in the development of a virtual meeting arena where relevant job-related information is exchanged and relational bonds among the network’s members are developed and reinforced. In addition, the use of social media by the network, together with other initiatives, seems to have contributed to influence some members’ way to think about the communication strategy of their companies. The results suggest that the border between the formal and job-related relations of the network’s members and their personal relations is

Keywords: social media, Facebook, networks, online communities/groups

**Evolution and contemporary challenges facing Human Resource
Professionals at the dawn of the XXI century:
Effect of Social Media in Star hotels in India**

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1. Abstract:

Tourism and other factors have created a demand for a home away from home. It is but natural that there is a connection between growth of tourism on one hand and growth of hotel facilities on the other. Major part of accommodation is available in hotels. The growth of hotels is complimentary to the growth of tourism. The hotels constitute the most important segment of the infrastructure facilities for tourism in India.

In this research paper the main focus is on Human Resources Management in star hotels and how Social media can effectively utilize the social platform for enhancing an employee's experience within the company thereby aiding the HR team, making development efforts through recruitment programs as well as medium of contacts for the staff working at different levels. It would also help to market the hotel brand through customers themselves. The purpose is to test the hypothesis linkage of social media sites with the development of human resources, required by star hotels for efficient, skilful services to domestic as well as for foreign visitors.

2. Key Word: Baby Boomers, Gen X, Gen Y, Star Hotels, Active Tourism, Human Resource Management (HRM), Social Media sites, Social Media Marketing, Creative outlet, Blogging, Product evangelists, Word of mouth marketing/advertising (WoM)

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3. Introduction

Hospitality Industry: Growth in India

Hotel Industry in India has witnessed a tremendous boom in recent years. Hotel Industry is inextricably linked to the tourism industry and the growth in the Indian tourism industry has supported the expansion of Indian hotel industry. The thriving economy and increased business opportunities in India have acted as a good support for Indian hotel industry. The arrival of low cost airlines and the associated price wars have given domestic tourists a large number of options. The '*Incredible India*' destination campaign and the recently launched '*Atithi Devo Bhavah*' campaigns have also helped in the development of domestic and international tourism and consequently the hotel industry. **Active Tourism** is a new travelling philosophy that combines adventure, ecotourism and cultural aspects of a discovery tour. Active Tourism is low-impact, ecological, socially compatible and high quality. Active Tourism aims to combine recreation, education and bring benefits to both the tourist as well to the visited land. Active Tourism has many aspects in common with ecotourism and nature tourism and it also integrates some activities of action and adventure tourism. Additionally it also includes some aspects of cultural tours and academic and scientific expeditions. The Policy of the government has been made more liberal than what it was 10 years back. Hospitality is defined as “the friendly reception and treatment of strangers” or “entertaining guests with courtesy and warmth”.

Internet and Social Media site Growth in India

The hospitality industry is part of a larger enterprise known as “the travel and tourism industry”. It is one of the oldest industries in the world. In early days, traders, explorers, missionaries and pilgrims needed a break in their journey requiring food, shelter, and rest. People opened their homes and kitchens to these weary travellers, and an industry was born. Although accommodation today is varied and their services have been changed and expanded over the ages. Commencing from a friendly greeting at the door, room service, breakfast to a host of facilities, the hospitality industry offers travellers a home away from home. Hospitality is also an industry made up of businesses that provide lodging, food and other services to travellers. The main components of this industry are hotels, motels, inns, resorts, and restaurants. The Internet has opened up communication across world boundaries. Why not use its social media components to expand our network, enhance our career, add friends, make connections, recruit employees, find people with scarce skills, develop candidate pools of passive potential employees, and enlarge our world view? I’m participating. Why not you, too?

- a. 60% of Americans regularly interact with companies on a social media site. But in India it is much less (37%), as the Internet penetration in India is still in its infancy.
- b. 43% of consumers say that companies should use social networks to solve the consumers' problems, and in India Star Hotels are still banking on traditional recruitment methods of employing professional third party.
- c. 41% believe that companies should use social media tools to solicit feedback product and services.

Reasons HR Staff Need to Participate in Social Media for Career Success

- a. **Stay in touch with colleagues and friends.** One finds “lost” people over the years, look them up on the popular social media sites. One may find them. And, if whole network is profiled and linked, one may never lose them again. Former

colleagues, out-of-touch since the early eighties and nineties have reached out and added to their professional networks at LinkedIn.

- b. **Help colleagues to find you.** There are many instances how former colleagues, friends, and associates have found own profiles and contacted. Many friends from high school, not seen or not met for thirty years, found online and called.
- c. **Find candidates for jobs.** One can email from social network with job requirements and ask for referrals. Tap into the power of current employees' networks by asking them to broadcast available positions to their networks. Companies are getting top applicants from employee networks on LinkedIn and Facebook. Star Hotels in their respective web sites can do the same. This is also one of the top ways to find passive candidates, people who may not currently be actively seeking work. Search on keywords to expand your contacts even beyond your network. As an example, here's "How to use LinkedIn for recruiting".

Develop a recruiting network and a candidate pool of potential employees with skills that will become increasingly scarce. Especially as the *baby boomers* retire or seek part-time opportunities, determine where managers will find the employees from Gen X (born in mid 1970-80) and from Gen Y (born after 1990) technology, medical, and quality skills, as examples, that organization will need for the future. Various social networks exist for a variety of career fields.

Plant hotel's foot print firmly in the social networks that will provide the future employees for the organization. Develop the skills necessary to fully utilize the potential of social media networking for HR and for one's own career. Seek the assistance of Gen-Y employees too. They are already networking on these sites (and wondering where are others?). The star hotel HR Managers want to recruit the kind of people with whom they want to work - and these potential employees are all on social networks.

- d. **Find a new job.** Desire to move on from current employer for whatever reason?

Use social media sites to assist in job search. Everything recommended for recruiting candidates is recommended for HR job search. Social media is a huge component in a current job search - or it should be if not already in India.

- e. **Establish the Brand online.** The employees can advertise themselves, what expertise do they have? What they want to be known for accomplishing? How do they want to be known and recognized by colleagues, other professionals, and potential employers? The information a potential employee put in social media profiles will eventually serve well to promote one's career progress - or, failing to develop an online presence in social media - not at all.

When a potential employer or a potential employee searches for a name in Google or another search engine, will the employer or potential employee find the credentials of a proficient professional? Or they will find an unprofessional college profile, developed for friends and family at Facebook? An unprofessional pages or profiles do nothing to further to one's career or job search. And, an increasing number of employers are searching for their online presence.

- f. **Join groups that share same interests, familiar community, or similar profession.** Facebook, as an example, allows one to create groups. Be a member of the job searching group and look for interesting online articles. Follow the people on Twitter and get recommendations on line from LinkedIn.

- g. **Develop social connections over time on social media sites.** Sites such as *Facebook* and *MySpace* allow much more "fun" than the more professionally oriented *LinkedIn*. Connections send me karma and virtual plants from Facebook, as an example. While both of these sites started for Gen Y people, mature professionals are increasingly joining them. Despite the fact that a friend's daughter tells Gen X people are too old for Facebook, it is increasingly

populated by professionals, too. In fact, mature professionals are the fastest growing segment in LinkedIn.

- h. **Be careful what to share to safeguard that professional image** referenced above, but recognise Social Media power to expand relationships. Recent College graduates and students, whom Star hotels want to recruit, (both permanently and temporarily) populate these sites and are well-versed in their use and comfortable reaching out from them. Gen Y people are fast disappearing from email and more active in a message wall on Facebook.
- i. **Provide a space in which the users of your product or service can interact with you.** Consumers want to have a conversation with potential employee about their wants and needs. They want to tell how he/she can better serve them. Many of them want to build community around products or services that they love. Give them the opportunity. Blog, sponsor user forums, and answer user comments.

Use of customers' feedback to improve; it's much easier to zap a note off to potential customer on Facebook, or to comment on customer's blog, than to write a letter to an anonymous address. Be out there. Interact. *Zappos*, the only shoe store has a lively feed on Twitter. It's just one example. And, if you need a strategy for helping your customers find you and talk with you, go where they are already talking and join the conversation. In fact, do this, too.
- j. **Build community around the product or service.** Are the people who are the "face" of the company approachable, likeable, knowledgeable, and out there in social media? One need to find these people and nurture them. They are increasingly the voice of the company. More than paid media opportunities, such as ads, television commercials, and traditional mass media approaches, the online world seek company and product evangelists who build a community of people who follow them and whom they follow. Word of mouth

marketing/advertising (WoM) provides the most powerful opportunity for you to reach people and for people to reach you.

4. Objectives:

- a. To study the adoption of social media applications in the hotel industry.
- b. To find out the interrelated outcomes from social media to the Human resource department
- c. To analyse the potential of marketing through social media.
- d. To analyse the potential of marketing through social media.

5. Conceptual framework:

- a. More web based interaction with customers
- b. Blogs (people can publish information immediately)
- c. Wikis (people can co-author content together)
- d. Employees can access information from home through social media
- e. Get relevant information as soon as it happens
- f. The platforms allows employees to chat amongst themselves to foster unity and a sense of family among them
- g. The platforms serve as lines of communications between managers and employees (and vice versa).
- h. The platform helps communicate the firm's culture and brand personality throughout the organization.

6. Literature Review

Human Resource

It is one of the important means of production. Business units without the use of human resource cannot be imagined. Demand for human resource as well the supply of human

resource is universal in nature. Similarly the demand and supply of human resource is available on both sides. The demand for labour is of mixed nature i.e., male as well as female employees are required to handle different tasks. It comes for ownership, control, and managing the business. The owner becomes the employer, and he starts demanding the various kinds of employees or subordinates, skilled, unskilled, semi-skilled candidates who mainly handle the implementation side of business. They follow the orders and instructions given by the owner, employer from time to time. In business there exists two way process decision making and policies determination by employer execution of orders, instructions, and implementation of policies quickly and as per the expectations of employer which in turn leads to business performance. Both the demand as well as supply side is of recurring nature. Demand for ownership and control of units and demand for employees, direct link with customers.

Features of Hotels in India

India, one of the dream destinations in the world, is slowly climbing up on the popularity charts of travellers in world of tourism. **Hotels in India** offer the best accommodation facilities to travellers from across the globe. Indian hotels are havens of luxury, comfort and coziness in all respects, satiating every possible desire of tourists.

The distinctive feature of **hotels in India** is their high standard and quality accommodation that caters to the varied needs of all kinds of clients at the most reasonable rates.

Indian Star hotels are categorized as **Luxury Hotels**, Standard Hotels, Budget Hotels and Heritage Hotels. Several Indian and international hotel chains also run their operations in various cities of India, offering quality services to business as well as leisure travellers. Tourists are made to feel like royal guests in these Indian hotels.

Hotels in India have always bowled tourists over with their warm hospitality, remarkable services, and world-class facilities. **Indian hotels** always strive to offer the best to their guests, enhancing the pleasure of their stay in the country.

Betsy Weber of *TechSmith Corporation*, writes “Your company, in addition to individual employees, needs to establish a company presence on significant social media sites”. The recent *Cone Business in Social Media study indicates* that “93% of Americans believe that a company should have a presence on social media sites and 85% believe that these companies should use these services to interact with consumers”. Of the study responders:

On the supply side the skilled labourers, employees are not readily available. It is because educated candidates mostly possess bookish and theoretical knowledge which has limited utility in handling various tasks and responsibilities assigned by the employer. The ability of such candidates falls short as compared with the needs of the organization. Shortage of practical knowledge indirectly influences the capacity of employees to accept and accomplish challenging tasks. They prefer to handle only routine work as job opportunity. It is a main problem (Quality of candidates or quantity of labourers as compared with the expectations of employer). The supply of quality labour is the major problem which developing countries like India are facing (which is also a highly populated country next to China, in the world). The supply of unskilled and semi unskilled labour is in higher proportion, than the supply of educated as well as skilled employees. In India, there is problem of educated unemployment on large scale and jobless young persons are in increasing proportion. It is one of the controversial issues in India. Labour supply is in huge proportion, as compared with needs and simultaneously there is problem of educated as well as uneducated, male, female candidates searching for job opportunities. Qualified, competent, experienced human resource is sometimes described as capital or asset of business but not available in the

market in adequate proportion (i.e., Demand always greater than supply, is a permanent feature in Indian Economy)

Table no-1- Different kinds of employee's requirements in star hotels in India

Entry level	Skilled level	Managerial Level
Front Office Bell-person Telephone operator Porter	Front Office Bell captain Telephone operator Front desk agent Reservations agent	Front Office Front office manager
Housekeeping Maid Assistant Supply person	Housekeeping Housekeeper Floor supervisor	Housekeeping House keeper
Food Production Kitchen helper Dishwasher Saucier	Food Production Baker, Garde manger Fry cook, Roast cook Vegetable cook	Food Production Executive chef
Engineering Maintenance person Painter, Electricians- helper	Engineering Plumber, Electrician Carpenter, Painter	Engineering Chief engineer
Marketing Clerk	Marketing Sales representative	Marketing Sales manager, Convention manager
Clerical Typist, File clerk	Clerical Secretary	Clerical Executive Secretary
Food& Beverage	Food & Beverage	Food & Beverage

Bus person Bar back Counter server	Food server Beverage server Host/ hostess, Captain, Bartender ,Waiter	F & B manager, Catering manager Banquet manager
Food Service Office File Clerk	Food Service Office Accountant	Food Service Office Food production manager
Accounting File clerk	Accounting Bookkeeper	Accounting Auditor
Security Security guard trainee	Security Security guard	Security Head of security
Human Resources Clerk	Human Resources Secretary or Executives	Human Resources Human resources manager
		Other Resident manager, Night manager ,Credit manager, Purchasing director General Manager, Regional director Vice president ,CEO

Issues and constraints facing Human Resources Management in Hotel Industry

The major issues and constraints facing human resources development in the hotel industry can be summarized as follows:

- a) Shortage of qualified manpower, particularly at the middle management level, which poses a major problem to the overall development of the hotel industry.

- b) Shortage of qualified and experienced teaching staff in hospitality training institutes.
- c) Shortage of training materials and facilities according to the current industry needs.
- d) Lack of strategies and policies (short as well as long term) for human resources development in the hospitality sector.
- e) Difficulty in keeping pace with rapidly changing technological innovations and dynamic changes in the global market in hospitality sector.
- f) Huge Gap between the training capacity of educational institutes and the actual need of the hospitality industry.

Meaning and Definition

HRD aims at giving finishing touch to existing skills and developing new additional skills. The new HRD approach stresses the need for developing the hotel industries employees to suit the changing trends and approaches on one hand and the hotel industries requirement on the other hand.

Social Media Marketing in a hotel industry

Hotel marketers dedicate precious resources dollars, time and energy luring and converting new customers. Often, their most valuable marketing resource is overlooked: brand advocates. This powerful segment of influential and passionate people is already singing the praises. They are more than just happy or satisfied customers. Brand advocates are ultimate promoters who love the company brand and are poised to recommend it, and convert others to it, through positive word of mouth, both online and off. Fuelled by social media and driven by passion and trust, advocates are mighty messengers and influencers.

As the social web redefines engagement, it has created new opportunities to touch customers in meaningful ways and build lasting relationships based on honesty and

trust. Consumers are engaging with their favourite brands, and as a result, shaping brands through their advocacy. Identifying and energizing a brand advocates can bring one the ultimate prize potent fuel for sales and marketing efforts.

7. Research Methodology:

Human resources development programs undertaken by star hotels (i.e. three stars and above) in two cities of Western India namely Mumbai and Pune, their recruitment methods and procedures, the training programs and organizational development have been studied. There are 7 Five star hotels, 17 Four star hotels and 20 three star hotels have been part of the research study in and around Pune and Mumbai in western India. The study group has considered and taken data for last 8 years data (2003-2010) after the Internet boom in-fluxed in hospitality Industry in India. The policies and training schedule are constantly changing so the data was not evenly distributed amongst all Hotels. These findings and dispersed data had impacted on individual performance and organizational behavior. The study group has concentrated mainly the influence of Internet and social media penetration in hospitality industry and these are the main points on which research student has focused attention. The focus was mainly on attempts made by star hotel management as to recruit and develop human resources, through training programs. (Other aspects of star hotel management are not considered)

Table No 2:- Growth of Star Hotels in India (Since 2001 to 2008)

Year	5 star	4 star	3 star	Total
2003	149	111	451	711

2004	152	120	472	744
2005	158	123	477	758
2006	167	125	480	772
2007	173	135	492	800
2008	179	141	534	854
2009	184	146	537	867
2010	199	151	683	1033
				6539

Fig No-01- Growth of Star Hotels in India (From 2003 to 2010)

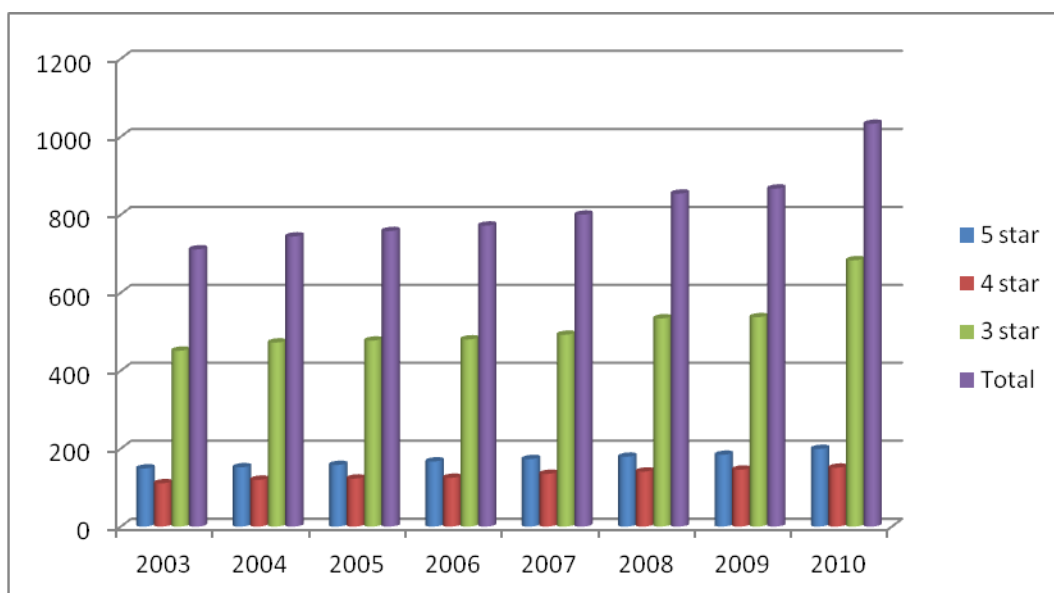


Table No-3: The number of hotels are considered for collection of data in the research

	5 Star	4 Star	3 Star	Total
Total no. of hotels in Pune	04	12	13	29
Total no of hotels in Mumbai	03	5	7	15
No. of hotels contacted for collecting information.	07	17	20	44
% of Data collection	100 %	66.67%	53%	64.10%

Hypothesis

H₁- Human resource department prefers social media the most for recruitment purpose.

H₂ -LinkedIn is the most preferred social website for human resource recruitment.

H₃ -Facebook is the most preferred social website for advertising and marketing.

8. Research Model and Data Analysis:

Sampling Design: In this study multistage- convenience sampling method is used. This is like cluster sampling, but with several stages of sampling and sub-sampling. This method is usually used in large-scale population surveys. Convenience sampling means a sample is drawn on the basis of opportunity.

Reasons for considering Multi stage Convenient Sampling:

- a. The process of selection is based on chance as the guests available in lounge of the Hotel.
- b. The study is of exploratory nature - it aims at having a feel of the issue or problems under study. There are many inputs from the samples which were not included in the questionnaires prepared for the research.
- c. There are pressing time constraints that prohibit adopting other sampling technique.
- d. The merits are - simplicity, convenience and low cost.

The Sampling Technique and Method

This method overcomes the chief hurdle of random sampling viz, giving unequal representation. Here unequal representation implies that certain parts of the populations may be better represented than others in the sample.

When the sample size is too large, it is always better to select a convenient sampling and select few people from whole. The method is useful in gaining an initial insight into the nature of the problem or for hypothesis formulation. The chief merit of this method is that the manner of picking up items from whole stratum is purely according to random sampling principles.

Data Analysis Procedure used:

The data collected through structured questionnaires and filtered in required manners tabulated and while analysing the data proper coding de-coding as per requirement of data were used. Statistical software *SPSS, ver-16* is used and percentage method, pie chart, chi square test are used for hypothesis testing.

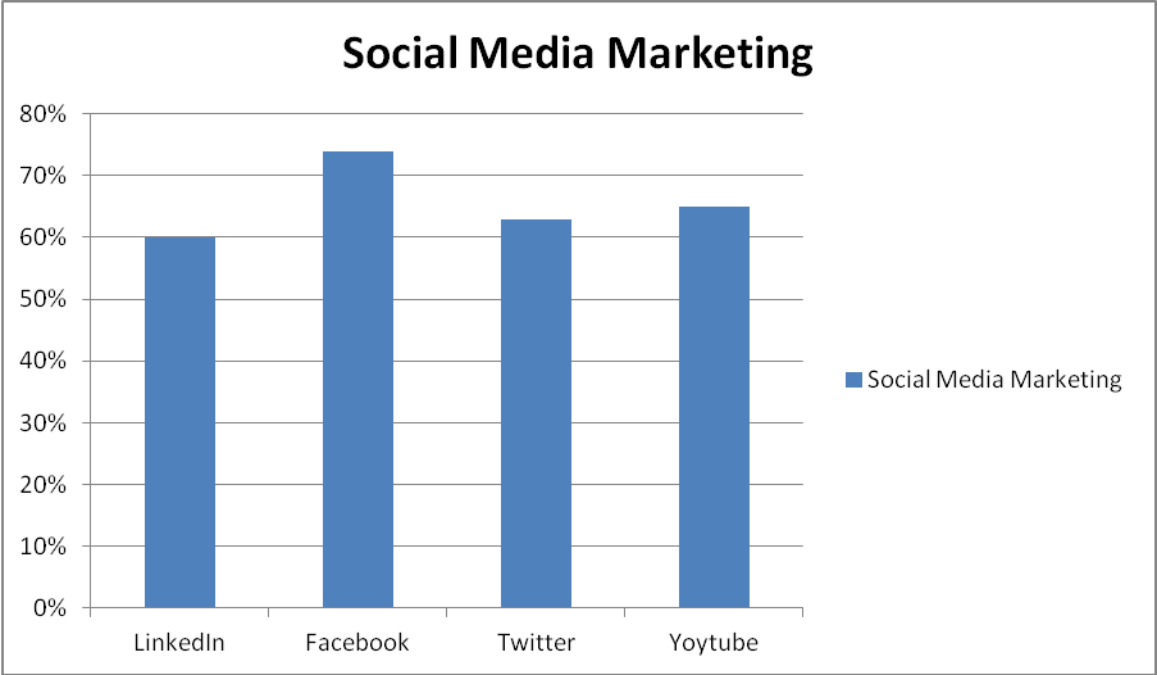
Contact method:

All sample units were personally contacted & interview technique was used for collection of information.

Reference Period:

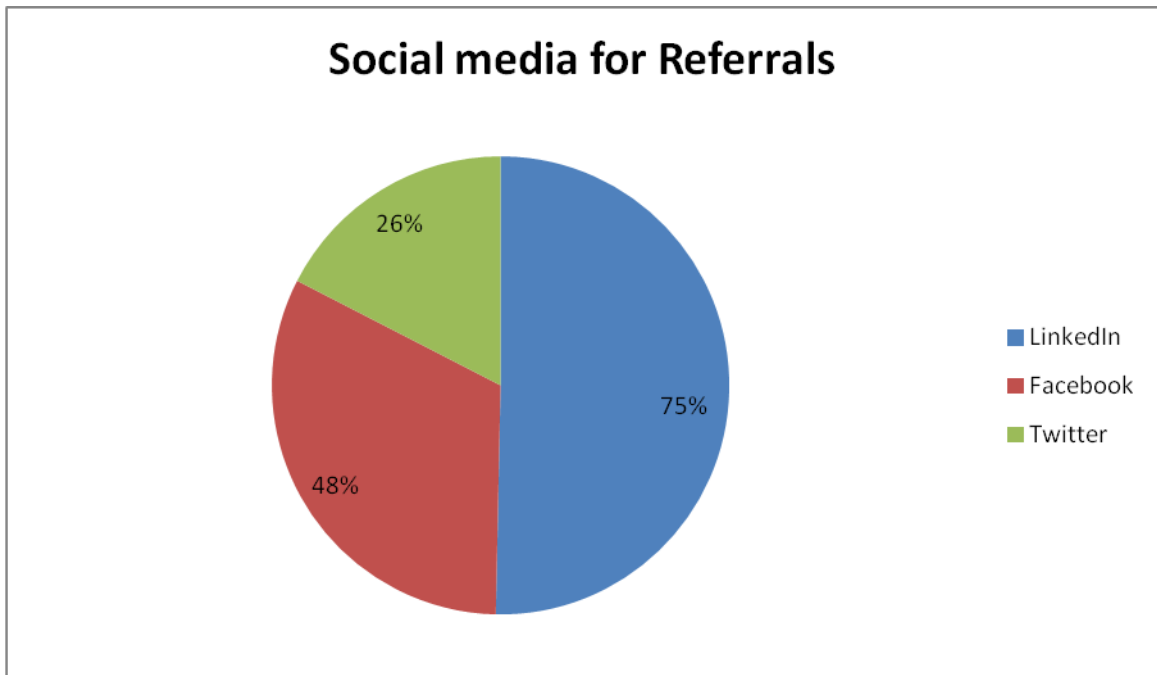
The survey of sample design population was under taken during the period from Nov - 2010 to March 2011.

Fig 2:- Graph showing different Social Media sites used for SM Marketing.



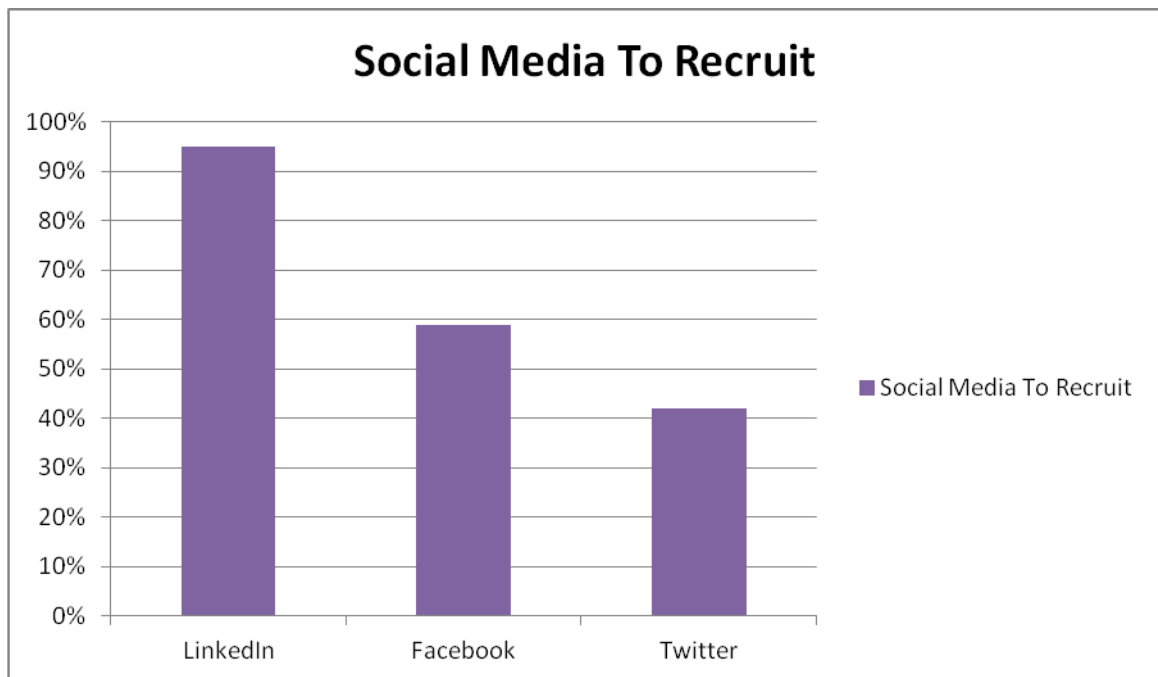
Interpretation: Facebook is the most used social website for corporate marketing.
(73%)

Fig No 3:- Pie chart showing SM sites used for Referrals.



Interpretation: LinkedIn is the most preferred social website for background checks. (75%)

Fig No – 4: Bar Chart showing uses of SM sites for Recruitment



Interpretation: LinkedIn is the most preferred site for recruitment in hospitality industry.

Hypothesis Testing:

H₁- Human resource department prefers social media the most for recruitment purpose.

Table No 4:- Data collected for Recruitment purpose

	Social Media Sites	Newspaper	Total
HR Prefers	65	180	245
HR Doesn't Prefer	45	20	65

Total	110	200	310
Chi-Sq	40.91451406		

Chi-sq- 40.9 > 16.96 at 5% significance level

As this Z value of 40.9 is highly significant, hence our hypothesis H_1 is rejected. Thereby proving newspaper is still the more dominating method and source of recruitment over social media sites in India.

H_2 - LinkedIn is the most preferred social website for human resource recruitment.

Table No 5:- Data collected for Preference of employee

	FB	LinkedIn	Total
HR Prefer	50	150	200
HR Doesn't Prefer	40	50	90
Total	90	200	290
Chi-Sq	10.96450617		

Chi-sq- $Z = 10.9 < 16.96$ at 5% significance level

As this Z value of 10.9 is with-in the permissible limit, hence our hypothesis H_2 is Accepted. There by proving LinkedIn as preferred Human resource Social website.

H₃ -Facebook is the most preferred social website for advertising and marketing

Table No 6:- Data collected for Preference of employee

	FB	LinkedIn	Total
Social Media for Marketing	54	120	174
Not for Marketing	50	78	128
Total	104	198	302
Chi-Sq	2.10515571		

Chi-square Z value - $2.10 < 16.96$ at 5% significance level

Hence our hypothesis H₃ is accepted thereby proving Facebook as the most preferred social website for advertising and marketing.

9. Findings:

- Only 17% people of the interviewed people said that they have got the job by using social media in India.
- Facebook is the most used social website for corporate marketing.
- LinkedIn is the most preferred site for recruitment in hospitality industry and background checks. The main advantages it has, over other sites that it gives the past work experiences and company's name.

- d) LinkedIn is the most preferred social website for job applications particularly in Managerial level.
- e) 78% respondents fear that social media could hamper employee productivity and likely to increase internal politics amongst employees.
- f) 73% respondents suspect social media could damage company's image and brand value. In fact they suspects only negative opinions and complaints will be published in these sites.
- g) 85% managers feel that social media is a liability. This could be due to limited knowledge of the power of social media by the executives.
- h) Only 23% HR managers use social media sites as an effective recruitment method.
- i) Comparatively a large number of customers, about 82% have visited the Hotel sites (both social media and hotel websites) before bookings or after the bookings to find out the opinion of previous guests.

10. Discussion

- a. The internet penetration in Indian country side is still in its infancy. The most of the supervisory level staff and below are from rural India, where awareness and accessibility of social media sites are that much limited.
- b. Majority of customers/ guests are from Pune area, rest are from Mumbai area. Mumbai is the centre of tourism and about 70% people are foreigners in Four and Five star hotels. Whereas Pune star hotel occupancy is an exclusively business person visiting automobile industry and software industry.
- c. Customers are shifting their hotel preferences because of their changing tour operators. The tour operators choose the hotels depending on the concessions and profit margins than in Social media marketing and comments by guests.

- d. The domestic customer pattern are shifting from unorganized hospitality sector to organized (Star) hotels due to various factors such as economical improvement and increased disposable income, payment option (Credit Card), cleanliness, variety and fun during holidays as well as during business tours.
- e. **Ratings & Reviews:** Guests trust guests, not marketers, so consumer reviews that come from advocates can be powerful. In fact, their recommendations are a leading influencer of decisions. It has been find out that managers put their own comments as guest. Even 'site counter' has been artificially inflated to show flow of traffic to the site.
- f. **Resources at Your Fingertips:** Regardless of the profession, we all know using social media allows us to expand our network. Details of the person can be checked and verified very quickly.
- g. **Balancing Productivity and Value:** Many human resources professionals remember when using the Internet at work became popular. Organizations were convinced that employees would spend all day surfing and not getting any work finished. The research find out many hotels prevented its employee to access internet in the hotel premises. Human resources departments are still fighting that battle. This time, it's social media.
- h. **First one needs to define your company's social goal**
 - Increase sales
 - Improve customer service
 - Decrease staffing and training cost

11. Scope and Limitations of the Study

- a. The study was limited to selected star hotels in Bombay and Pune area of Western India.

- b. Due to the Time constraint of the research team the sample size was limited to 519 only. 315 hotel employees and 204 guests were interviewed. A larger sample size would give more accurate result.
- c. The sample mostly carried out was in the afternoon time when the maximum hotel employees were less busy. If we could collect data during other time the findings might be different.
- d. There were only 4 people in the research team. A larger team would have brought better data.

12. Conclusion:

This is observed there is a tremendous change in human resources management strategy and behaviour of hotel guests after arrival of internet and social media in to the business. Attractive offers and pricing policy of the star hotels and availability of direct interaction with hotel staff and potential guests under one roof/connection with attractive price always instigate and motivate to buy from Star Hotel's own portal or website or social media space. Majority of customers have shifted to organise their own customs made tour programme with the help of Social media site. People find their own jobs with chat and facebook friends. These sites act as referral sites. Though the potential of Social media as a Human resource and marketing tool to Indian domestic consumers still not fully exploited by the tourism industry. Regardless of the profession, we all know using social media allows us to expand our network. And human resources are no exception. Its often said human resources can be a lonely profession. One minute you're at the holiday party and the next you're terminating someone's employment.

13. Further Scope of Research

- a) A similar research can be carried out in other parts of the region as well as other parts of the country.

- b) This research is concern especially in the HR aspects of the social media sites and its potential. There are enough scope in other segments like training, Organisational developments, B2B dealings etc.
- c) This study can be carried out in the budgeted hotel and non-star boarding and lodging establishments (motels, hostels, service apartments, bed-breakfast) as well.

14. Managerial Implications

The findings of research are helpful for all star hotel Managers and all those who are in research for understanding the changing behaviour of consumers/ guests related in hospitality industry. In near future the direct recruitment will be most preferred means to applying jobs not only in hospitality industry but in all other industry as well. To understand the consumer booking behaviour is very important for formation of any kind of marketing strategy and implementation of sales promotion schemes for enhancing the overall sales volume of the hospitality industry and star hotels. As more and more Gen Y people are joining the industry, the HR Managers are required to improve their computer knowledge and should be more knowledgeable and active in Social media sites.

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Volunteered geographic information: a resource for the tourism industry?

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Can the increasing prevalence of smartphones and other mobile devices with global positioning systems (GPS), together with social platforms for information sharing and building, enable the production of locally grounded, rich and up-to-date geo-tagged tourist information? This paper considers ongoing Norwegian projects that are providing the groundwork for a mobile, location based, hiking application.

The collection of Volunteered Geographic Information (VGI), a form of 'user-generated content', has been made much easier by social Web 2.0 platforms and mobile devices with built-in GPS. Companies use web-based customer input to collect and correct data, and larger user driven projects such as OpenStreetMap (OSM, comparable to Wikipedia in philosophy and development) may potentially revolutionise the way traditional authorities of geographic information (such as Ordnance Survey and tourist boards) work and collect data. Combined with the opening up of existing data sources in the 'Open Data' movement, highlighted by data.gov, data.gov.uk and the Norwegian equivalent data.norge.no, there are growing opportunities for local communities to combine efforts with traditional authorities and online communities to generate locally grounded, rich and up-to-date geo-tagged tourist information.

This study features several, small community projects set in scenic, rural areas where nature based tourism is underexploited. These projects aim to engage the community through local organisations, to generate geo-tagged information about hiking routes, points of interest,

natural features, historic artefacts, etc.; necessary information for creating a mobile location aware app for tourists but which also builds upon existing information found in data.norge.no.

The study sets out to answer the following: How suitable are online VGI communities, their systems and tools for tourist information? Do local communities engage with online VGI communities (especially OSM), and what factors inhibit or facilitate this? Do they provide information useful for tourists? Are there quality and security issues? Do the projects bring together traditional and new ways of data collection? What functionality is sought by tourists for a mobile hiking application?

Data has been collected from observations, project meetings, internet forums, and interviews with key participants. To uncover desired functionality for a mobile application, a group interview of outdoor sports students was conducted along with a survey of tourists at local tourist offices. A review of information contributed to OpenStreetMap in the course of the local projects is also being conducted.

Keywords: volunteered geographic information, mobile, tourist information, user-generated content, open data, OpenStreetMap

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STUDY OF PERCEPTION CONCERNING „EMBLEMATIC” OBJECTIVES OF THE WORLD TOURISM WITHIN ROMANIAN YOUTH BY MEANS OF THE KELLY GRID

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Abstract

Each country has a tourist symbol that is easily recognizable worldwide, for instance, the Eiffel Tower means Paris - France, Big Ben means London - England, Taj Mahal – India etc. and some of these are perceived as that „thing” to which we dream all life. The young in Romania is among such kind of potential tourists, they dream to travel, and see as many world famous tourist objectives as possible. However, for most Romanians (regardless their age) traveling is a „tabu” topic as „to travel” is one of the expensive activities of their spare time that a rather small percentage of Romanian tourists afford, but all of them „dream” to these famous tourist destinations.

In order to research the perception of a tourist (or potential tourist) in relation to such a tourist destination, to carry out image studies of a tourist destination, respectively both market qualitative and quantitative methods can be used.

Therefore we have surveyed perception of these famous tourist destinations worldwide by means of both a qualitative method and statistical quantitative methods. Thus, we have used the **Kelly grid (repertory grid interview)** as a qualitative method for both generation of pairs concerning opposite attributes of „symbols” related to the world tourism

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within the youth in Romania (practically a group of students for the Economy of commerce, services and tourism specialization) as well as for data collection. For data collection we have used a statistical descriptive method for data analysis, the **principal component analysis**, respectively.

Therefore color photos have been used with national „symbols” of world tourism: *Eiffel Tower, Moulin Rouge, Louvre and Versailles museums– Paris, France, Big Ben, Buckingham Palace– London, England, Burj Al Arab and Palm – Dubai, Rio de Janeiro Carnival– Brasil, Colosseum – Rome, Verona (Juliet balcony) and Venice – Italy, Kremlin and Red Square – Moscow, Russia, Dervish dancers– Turkey, Jesus Christ giant statue – Brasil, Forbidden City and Chinese Wall – China, Pyramides and Sphinx – Egypt, Sagrada Familia – Spain, Taj Mahal – India, Vatican, Schonbrunn Castle – Vienna, Austria.*

We consider that the results of this research emphasize significant features of Romanian tourists’ perception in relation to these important tourist objectives, emblematic in the world, features that represent important variables in order to carry out the image studies, the policy and communication and promotion strategies of the tourist market „players”, respectively: tour- operators, travel agencies, air operators etc.

Keywords: Kelly grid, principal component analysis, Romanian market, perception, image study, tourism

INTRODUCTION

Tourism generally but, especially, foreign tourism contributes to the deeper or faster integration of a country in foreign circuits, having a series of indirect effects related to

opening, free circulation and communication, cultural, artistic and knowledge effects, as well as a way of using the spare time [Jivan, 2004]. Increase of importance concerning a tourist activity in more and more countries, emphasizes a more active presence in the economic and social life, but also a significant participation to the general progress generally and last but not least, the drive force of the socio-cultural development and environment. *Under these circumstances, we sustain the above mentioned by data related to the development of foreign tourism (fig. 1) in 1990 - 2010.*

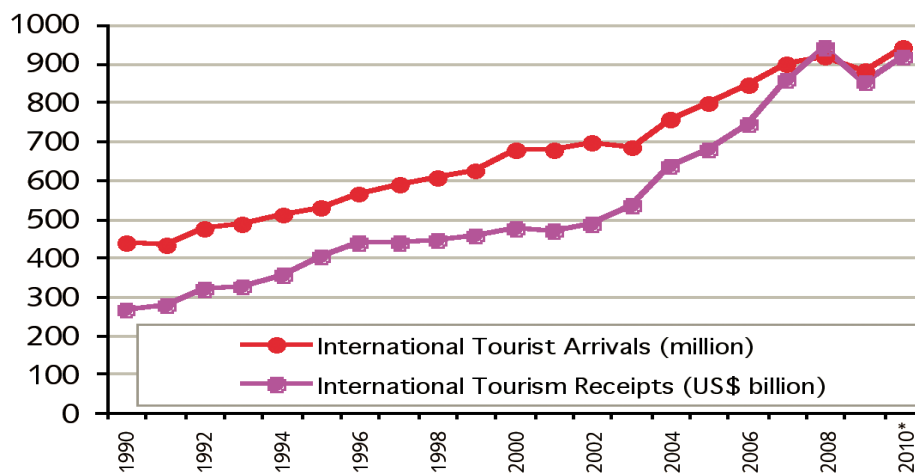


Fig. 1 - Inbound tourism, worldwide in 1990-2010

(Source: **WTO**, *Tourism Highlights*, 2011, p. 3)

Therefore, in 2010, world tourism recovered more strongly than expected from the shock it suffered in late 2008 and 2009 as a result of the global financial crisis and economic recession. Worldwide, international tourist arrivals reached 940 million in 2010, up 6.6% over the previous year. The vast majority of destinations reported positive and often double-digit increases, sufficient to offset losses or bring them close to this target. Recovery came at

different speeds – much faster in most emerging economies (+8%) and slower in most advanced ones (+5%). [WTO, Tourism highlights, 2011, p. 3].

Regionally, the top of first countries according to indicators *international tourist arrivals* and *international tourism receipts* is shown in **table 1**. What should be noted is that, eight of the top ten destinations appear in both lists, even though they show marked differences in terms of the characteristics of the tourists they attract [WTO, Tourism highlights, 2011, p. 5]

Table 1 - International Tourist Arrivals and receipts

Arrivals					Receipts				
Rank	million		Change (%)		Rank	US \$ billion		Change (%)	
	2009	2010	09/08	2009		2009	2010	09/08	10/09
1. France	76,8	76,8	-3,0	0,0	1. United States	94,2	103,5	-14,7	9,9
2. United States	55,0	59,7	-5,1	8,7	2. Spain	53,2	52,5	-13,7	-1,2
3. China	50,9	55,7	-4,1	9,4	3. France	-49,4	46,3	-12,7	-6,2
4. Spain	52,2	52,7	-8,8	1,0	4. China	39,7	45,8	-2,9	15,5
5. Italy	43,2	43,6	1,2	0,9	5. Italy	40,2	38,8	-12,0	-3,6
6. United Kingdom	28,2	28,1	-6,4	-0,2	6. Germany	34,6	34,7	-13,2	0,1
7. Turkey	25,5	27,0	2,0	5,9	7. United	30,1	30,4	-16,3	0,8

					Kingdom				
8.Germany	24,2	26,9	-2,7	10,2	8. Australia	25,4	30,1	2,5	18,6
9. Malaysia	23,6	24,6	7,2	3,9	9. Hong Kong	16,4	23,0	7,5	39,5
10.Mexico	21,5	22,4	-5,2	4,4	10.Turkey	21,3	20,8	-3,2	-2,1

(Source: calculated based on **WTO**, *Tourism highlights, 2011*, p. 5)

France has the first place as regards arrivals of foreign tourists recording the same number of tourists in 2009 și 2010, 76.8 million, respectively. The United States is on the first place as regards inbound tourism, collecting \$103.5 billion, and is on the second place concerning arrivals of foreign tourists. Countries such as China, Spain, Italy, Germany and United Kingdom, are in the top of the first countries regarding inbound tourism. This situation could be explained by the fact that, these countries are in the top of the most important tourist destinations, as we can notice in **table 2**.

As regards costs within foreign tourism in 2010, situation is similar, the first place is occupied by Germany, with US\$ 77.7 billion, followed by the United States with USD 75.5 billion., China with USD 54.9 billion, United Kingdom with USD 48.6 billion and France with USD 39.4 billion. [**WTO**, *Tourism highlights, 2011*, p. 10].

Table 2 - Top Ten Tourist Destination in the world, in 2011

Rank	Tourist destination
1	Taj Mahal , Monuments & Landmarks in Agra, India
2	Great Wall of China , Forts and Fortifications in Beijing, China

3	<i>Eiffel Tower, Monuments & Landmarks in Paris, France</i>
4	St. Peters Basilica, Churches & Abbeys in <i>Rome, Italy</i>
5	Alhambra, Castles & Palaces in Granada, Spain
6	Empire State Building, Contemporary Architecture in New York City, United States
7	Monet's Gardens, Gardens in North East France, France
8	St. Pauls Cathedral, Churches & Abbeys in London, United Kingdom
9	Reichstag, Contemporary Architecture in Berlin, Germany
10	Westminster Abbey, Churches & Abbeys in London, United Kingdom

(Source: Top Ten Tourist Destination, May, 1st, 2011, <http://articles.novelssoft.com.np>)

We can notice from this data that, countries that spend most money on tourism are strongly developed countries, and tourists here afford visiting the most important tourist objectives worldwide, and afford expensive holidays in any tourist destination.

As regards the foreign tourism of Romania, in 2010, 7498 thousand arrivals were registered concerning foreign tourists in Romania and 10905 thousand arrivals regarding Romanian tourists abroad. (**Table 3**). In the surveyed period, 2007-2010, international arrivals of tourists registered an average decline of 2.91%, and departures of Romanian visitors abroad registered an average decline of 0.18%. Therefore, it is required to attract as many tourists as possible and in the future international arrivals of tourists should exceed departures of Romanian visitors abroad.

Under these circumstances we should mention that, Romania has rich and various tourist resources, therefore resulting a great availability of our country for tourism, and their effective exploitation to the interest of the national economy may represent a real chance of

development.

Table 3 - Foreign tourism of Romania, in 2007 - 2009

Indicators	2007	2008	2009	2010	$\bar{I}(\%)$	R(%)
Arrivals of foreign tourists (, 000)	7722	8862	7575	7498	97,09	-2,91
Departures of Romanian tourists (,000)	10980	13072	11723	10905	99,82	-0,18

(Source: calculated based on *Statistical Directory of Romania*, 2010)

At the same time, related to tourism receipts in 2007-2010, (**table 4**) we can notice a low level, showing an average decline of 12.21%.

Table 4 - Inbound tourism in Romania, in 2007-2010

Indicator	2007	2008	2009	2010	$\bar{I}(\%)$	R (%)
Tourism receipts (US \$ million)	1606	1992	1082	954	87,79	-12,21

(Source: calculated based on *Euromonitor International*, Romania, Jan. 2011, <http://www.euromonitor.com/romania/country-factfile>)

Thus, tourist service suppliers (tour-operators, travel agencies, hotel operators, air operators) should adopt a strategic approach in doing business, as there is a series of factors that compete to this situation: political factors, economic and financial situation, concerns regarding total quality, quality of services provided by competing countries in the field of tourism, promotional activities of competing countries, development of major groups and hotel chains, managerial strategies used to get the competition advantage. Under these circumstances, the need of developing tourist services is absolute for our country, but also for modern economies in general, due to the following factors: dynamics of contemporary economic life, the entry of our country in the world circuit and circulation, increase of entertainment need etc. (Pantelescu, 2009).

Under these world economic and tourist circumstances for the „players” of the market operating in the field of tourism, apart economic, socio – demographic, political variables etc. that contribute to a balance between the demand and supply of tourist products and services are important and subjective variables, more difficult to quantify quantitatively, statistically, that are related to perception, own experience of life etc. Thus, starting from all this considerations we carried out a study that enables both collection and quantification of such variables but especially their detailed, intrinsic interpretation. Thus we consider that, the mixed use of the *Kelly* grid and the data analysis statistical method i.e. the *principal component analysis* – showed in paragraphs two and three -, led to important results for the firms operating on the tourist market, results showed in paragraph four, previously being described the sample of subjects used in this research.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING THE KELLY GRID

The Kelly grid (or repertory grid interview) is a qualitative method that is based on the

Kelly *personal construct theory*, theory that sustains that a subject perceives surrounding reality through its own partiality, his own life experience. Key points of **Personal Construct Theory** that Kelly’s grid is based on are:

- 1. perceptions influence expectations and expectations influence perceptions;
- 2. the mean of this situation is known as a construct system;
- 3. the personal construct system is unique, customized and developed through experience.

Kelly’s grid is a matrix used to find out the **product important attributes from the utility point of view**. Product attributes are factors leading to buying; product attributes are the basis of identification by the buyer of a potential response to a need.

The Kelly’s personal construct theory considers that every person uses personal concepts to perceive the external world and that determine his behavior and are able to make him explain other people behavior. To this end, the individual uses “elements” and “constructions”. Elements are “objects of a person’s intellection that can be people, objects or have abstract qualities as justice, despotism, jealousy”. Constructions are “the quality a person is using in order to “think” these elements”.

The Kelly grid is a basic matrix type “elements x constructions” much more complex than an element matrix (**fig. 2**).

Elements						
Eiffle Tower	Louvre museum	Versailles	Moulin Roge	Taj Mahal

								Constructions	
								Similar pole	Opposed pole
✓	✓	x							
			✓	x	✓				
	x					✓	✓		
x		✓			✓				
	✓			x		✓			
x			✓			✓			
	x			✓			✓		

Fig. 2 – Kelly grid for generating pairs of opposite attributes

The results of applying the Kelly grid are represented in pairs of explicitly relevant antonym attributes that are lately used to get some relevant common factors to be applied in the quantitative marketing research.

Compared to other methods analyzing the self – concept, such as the Q factor analysis or the Osgood differential semantic, the Kelly grid shows the **major advantage** [Fournier, 1996], *that enables the subjects to look inside their world in the relevant terms of personality, these dimensions being more important than dimensions required by the researcher*. The main **disadvantage** [Mitchell and Kiral, 1999] of the Kelly grid is provided by restriction of mental and imaginative capability *of subjects to reflect their experiences verbally in qualitative idiosyncratic terms*.

For this research in the stage of generating the Kelly grid „**constructions**“, color photos

have been used, „**elements**” of the following world tourist objectives : *Eiffel Tower, Moulin Rouge, Louvre and Versailles museums– Paris, France, Big Ben, Buckingham Palace– London, England, Burj Al Arab and Palm – Dubai, Rio de Janeiro Carnival– Brasil, Colosseum – Rome, Verona (Juliet balcony) and Venice – Italy, Kremlin and Red Square – Moscow, Russia, Dervish dancers– Turkey, Jesus Christ giant statue – Brasil, Forbidden City and Chinese Wall – China, Pyramides and Sphinx – Egypt, Sagrada Familia – Spain, Taj Mahal – India, Vatican, Schonbrunn Castle – Vienna, Austria.*

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING THE PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS (ACP)

The principal component analysis is one of the descriptive data analysis methods that are applied quite often for quantitative data, being one of the factor analysis methods, but it shows methodological features compared to the „conventional” factor analysis.

The basic principle of this method is to select the lowest number of components to recover as much as possible the total information contained in primary data, these new components expressing new attributes of individuals and built so as they are non-correlated between them, each of these new variables being a linear combination of primary variables. This method provides a graphic visualization of *the map of individuals* in the study according to similarities between them and the *map of variables* according to their correlations.

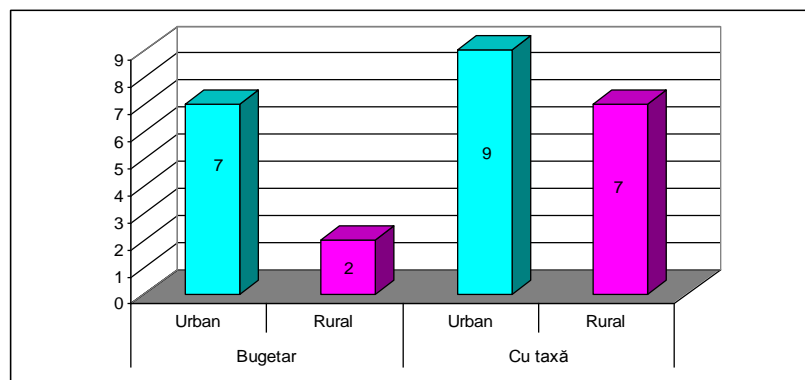
Although this method is based on the same principle as in the case of factor analysis (in principle it is a linear factor method), the main component analysis differs from it by the way of definition of elements related to initial data table and the calculation way of the distance between points. As a descriptive method of data analysis is applied **only** to quantitative variables and large tables comprising information related to more than 15

individuals and 4 variables.

Application of the Kelly grid is based on the perception of similarity or dissimilarity of the components of a triad of stimuli, selected from the relevant stimuli for each subject randomly comprised in research. Recurrence of some triads identical for the same respondent is not allowed.

PRESENTATION OF SAMPLE OF SUBJECTS

The sample used within this study consisted of 25 students for the specialization „Economy of commerce and services” (ECTS) of the „Petru Maior” University in Tîrgu Mureş, Faculty of Economic, Legal and Administrative Science for the II-nd and the III-rd years of education. The sample has the following socio-demographic and thematic features – **fig. 3**:



**Fig. 3 – Structure of sample according to their origin,
budgetary or fee students**

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

By applying the Kelly grid, 42 pairs of attributes have been generated using the Kelly grid form in **figure 1** and color photos of tourist objectives used in research, **these** pairs of attributes being shown in **table 5**.

Table 5 – The 42 pairs of attributes („constructions”) generated by sample

1. history – entertainment	21. Asian objectives – European objective
2. complex architecture – modern architecture	22. Asian culture – European culture
3. building large area – building small area	23. Urban location – nature location
4. symbolizes history and religion – symbolizes "riot"	24. Relaxation tourism - event tourism
5. dedicated to spiritual relaxation - dedicated to "physical" relaxation	25. Relaxation - vitality
6. for "day" tourism- for "night" tourism	26. Limited access – Unlimited access
7. political intrigues – religious intrigues	27. Annual event – permanent sightseeing
8. cold colors - strong colors	28. Decent wear - casual wear
9. luxury decorations - kitch decorations	29. Fastuos -elegant
10. African origin – European origin	30. Extravagance - purity
11. North - South	31. Italian culture – Russian culture
12. High constructions - wide constructions	32. Democracy - communism
13. Exotic landscape – conventional landscape	33. Spiritual death - "real" death
14. Religious tourism – Entertaining tourism	34. Single objective (a single building – Multiple objective
	35. dedicated to divinity – dedicated to "common people"

15. Gothic architecture focused on details and decorations – modernist architecture	36. one of the 7 wonders of the world – one of the 7 enjoyments of the world
16. Stone - metal	37. Magnificence of buildings – magnificence of costumes
17. Religious tribute – tribute to French revolution	38. for socialization- for meditation
18. sanctuary – historic monument	39. dynamic - static
19. can be seen from moon – cannot be seen from moon	40. spiritual performance – architectural performance
20. defence construction – royal residence construction	41. sacre- profane
	42. water = life – desert = death

Afterwards there has been filled in, individually by subjects, the Kelly grid, using evaluation ranks from 1 to 5 (1 with significance it has no attribute, 5 – it totally has the attribute). Using of ranks has several advantages [**Jerrard**, 1998]: using the *scatter plot* as a graph, shows the relations between constructions determined by the relative numerical position of elements on dimensions of constructions, the easiness of using statistical processing software.

In order to process data gathered by means of the Kelly grid, the **ACP** with varimax rotation has been applied several times (final correlation matrix that was the origin of providing this research being found in **Appendix no. 1**), thus:

1. over all the 42 initial variables (pairs of opposite attribute pairs generated by subjects), resulting 10 principal components that were explaining 76.34 % of total variance;
2. 15 initial variables have been removed (that were not correlating significantly, they had correlation coefficients below 0.500 respectively), resulting 5 principal components that were explaining 72.3% of the total variance;
3. Only those pairs of attributes were kept that were correlating (positively or negatively) significantly (with values over 0.500), resulting 4 principal components that explain 73.92%

of the total variance, the results of this analysis being shown in table 6.

Table 6 - Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8,097	42,615	42,615	8,097	42,615	42,615
2	2,944	15,497	58,112	2,944	15,497	58,112
3	1,586	8,347	66,459	1,586	8,347	66,459
4	1,418	7,464	73,923	1,418	7,464	73,923
5	,860	4,526	78,449			
.....			
19	,064	,336	100,000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Applying the **ACP** several times emphasized that within the 42 „constructions”/pairs of attributes generated by subjects there was redundant information that was not emphasizing anything quantitatively, statistically, thus justifying the use of the ACP data analysis statistical method to reduce the number of initial variables. Also, the **ACP** application will help us to a better visualization in vector space of the 24 tourist objectives „emblematic” in the world and used as „elements” of the Kelly grid, in line with the 19 „constructions” remained in study, respectively to identify through which subjective, perceivable attributes are characterized, and through what they differentiate better, respectively, these tourist objectives used in the study within the higher educated youth in Romania.

Analyzing the correlation coefficient matrix for the 19 pairs of attributes, it is noticed that, among these variables there are both negative and significant positive correlations. For instance the „construction” *history – entertainment* is positively correlated significantly with almost all the other „constructions”, except *for socialization – for meditation* and *static – dynamic*. There also „constructions” of the Kelly grid that is correlated prevailingly negatively with most other variables/ “constructions” for instance *exotic landscape – conventional landscape*, *dynamic – static*, *for socialization – for meditation*. From data shown in **table 6**, it can be noticed that, we can retain for the study *four principal components*, the 24 tourist objectives used in the study will be represented on four factor axes made of the combination of initial variables, as only for these components own values higher than 1 have been achieved (*Kaiser criterium*). *Benzecri criterium* (scree plot in **figure 4**) -, confirms these components that explain together 73.92 % of the total variance as regards the point cloud.

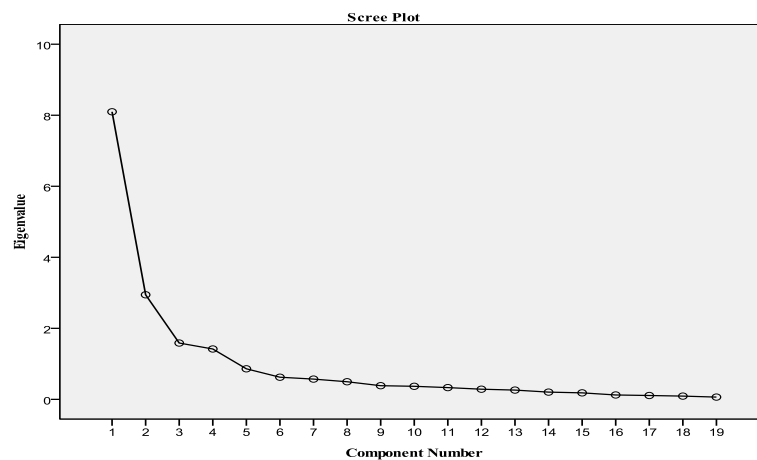


Fig. 4 – Scree plot- graph of own values

We can also notice that a proportion of 73.92 % of the initial information is extracted from the new variables. **Figure 5** illustrates the components obtained by the rotation of axes

by the *varimax method* for the 19 “*personal construct*” of the Kelly grid. The values of correlation coefficients in **Appendix no. 1** are used as coordinates of initial variables in the vector plan of the three principal components.

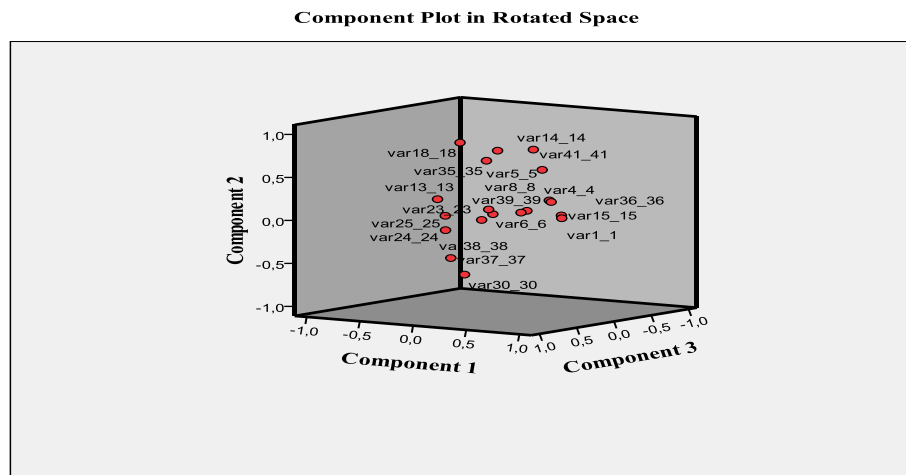


Fig. 5 – Diagram of components in space obtained by varimax rotation

Analyzing the graph in **figure 5** and based on the results shown in **table 7**, that contain the *principal component matrix* following the *Varimax rotation* normalization of own vectors, as well as the coordinates of contributions as regards statistical units and variables on the factor axes, results the following grouping of the 19 „constructions” of the Kelly grid on the four principal components:

1. **the first principal component** explains that most total variance, 42.62% respectively consists of the following pairs of opposite attributes: *history* – *entertainment*, *symbolizes history and religion* - *symbolizes "dissoluteness"*, *exotic landscape* – *conventional landscape*, *Gothic architecture focused on details and decorations* – *modernist architecture*, *cold colors* – *strong colors*, *for "day" tourism*- *for "night" tourism*, *one of the 7 wonders of the*

world – one of the 7....enjoyments of the world, for socialization – for meditation. Thus it will be called „history – present”.

2. **the second principal component** fully consists of those constructions that were generated in case when triads of extracted pictures were containing monuments that were symbolizing religious aspects, respectively: *sacre- profane, sanctuary – historic monument, religious tourism – relaxation tourism, extravagance – purity, dedicated to divinity – dedicated to "common people", dedicated to spiritual relaxation – dedicated to "physical" relaxation*. It will be thus called „spirituality – evanescent, earth-born” and this component explains 15.5% of the total variance explained by the initial research variables;

3. **the third principal component** consists of variables that describe alike the main goal of an activity for spending spare time, such as tourism but also the goal targeted mainly by young tourists, entertainment, „night” activities, dynamism, consisting of the following Kelly grid „constructions”: *relaxation– stamina, relaxation tourism – event tourism, magnificence of buildings – magnificence of costumes and dynamism – static*. It will be thus called „relaxation versus dynamism” and it also explains 8.35 % of the total variance explained by all pairs of attributes;

4. **the fourth principal component** consists of a single „construction”, *urban localization – localization in nature* respectively that explains 7.46% of the total variance explained by the 19 pairs of attributes remained in study. It will be thus called „urban versus nature”.

Table 7 - Rotated Component Matrix^a

Initial variables, “constructions”	Component
------------------------------------	-----------

	1	2	3	4
History – entertainment	,839	,107	,313	-,079
Symbolizes history and religion - symbolizes "riot"	,756	,292	,337	-,081
Exotic landscape – conventional landscape	-,717	,091	-,242	-,464
Gothic architecture focused on details and decorations- modernist architecture	,659	,085	,060	,469
Cold colors – strong colors	,636	,199	,491	-,030
For "day" tourism- for "night" tourism	,633	,188	,566	-,064
One of the 7 wonders of the world- one of the 7....enjoyments of the world	,627	,273	,178	-,291
For socialization – for meditation	-,594	-,581	-,244	,078
Sacre- profane	,134	,801	,168	-,042
Sanctuary - historic monument	-,420	,797	-,119	,070
Religious tourism - relaxation tourism	,295	,793	-,083	-,121
Extravagance - purity	-,402	-,741	-,155	-,050
Dedicated to divinity - dedicated to "common people"	,043	,677	,187	,196
Dedicated to spiritual relaxation – dedicated to "physical relaxation"	,498	,603	,088	-,084
Relaxation- vitality	,146	,149	,887	,110
Relaxation tourism - event tourism	,148	-,019	,886	,072

Magnificence of buildings –magnificence of costumes	,366	,097	,713	-,302
Dynamic - static	-,521	-,130	-,704	-,039
Urban location – location in nature	-,080	,069	-,017	,922

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

In order to be able to carry out the *internal interpretation* of the four components the correlation coefficients are calculated between the initial research variables and these principal components, results emphasized in **table 8**, based on the table data, and as a result, it can be noticed that:

- Of the pairs of opposite attributes that form the first principal component, most correlated with this component is *history – entertainment*, followed by *Gothic architecture focused on details and decorations – modernist architecture*. This principal component also contains variables that negatively correlate with it, these being: *exotic landscape – conventional landscape* and *for socialization – for meditation*. Another important aspect related to internal interpretation is provided by the fact that the first component is negatively correlated with the „construction” that forms the fourth principal component „**urban versus nature**”;
- As regards the second component, the initial variable that forms it *extravagance – purity* is negatively correlated with this component and almost all „constructions” that form the second component „**spirituality– evanescence, earth-born**” are negatively correlated with the first component „**history – present**”;
- All variables that form the third component „**relaxation versus dynamism**” are negatively correlated with the first component „**history – present**”.

Table 8 - Component Score Coefficient Matrix

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
History – entertainment	,232	-,062	-,070	-,056
Symbolizes history and religion - symbolizes "riot"	,174	,003	-,039	-,053
Exotic landscape – conventional landscape	-,217	,101	,063	-,287
Gothic architecture focused on details and decorations- modernist architecture	,222	-,039	-,135	,292
Cold colors – strong colors	,098	-,012	,066	-,018
For "day" tourism- for "night" tourism	,079	-,016	,102	-,039
One of the 7 wonders of the world – one of the 7...enjoyments of the world	,170	,010	-,083	-,188
For socialization- for meditation	-,103	-,111	,043	,046
Sacre- profane	-,078	,229	,038	-,014
Sanctuary - monument istoric	-,219	,292	,046	,061
Religious tourism – relaxation tourism	,050	,210	-,122	-,070
Extravagance- purity	-,033	-,183	,035	-,040
Dedicated to divinity – dedicated to "common people"	-,108	,205	,075	,137
Dedicated to spiritual relaxation – dedicated to "physical" relaxation	,104	,129	-,092	-,050

Relaxation- vitality	-,189	,025	,380	,082
Relaxation tourism - event tourism	-,169	-,027	,380	,056
Magnificence of buildings – magnificence of costumes	-,048	-,020	,237	-,186
Dynamic - static	-,005	,022	-,197	-,029
Urban location – location in nature	-,046	,044	,024	,589

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

In order to analyze the vector space position of the four principal components for the 24 tourist objectives of global importance, descriptive statistics indicators have been applied, affiliation outlined based on them, or not, of each objective in the space of the four components. Also for a better visualization as regards „location” of the 24 tourist objectives in relation to the factor axes, their illustration has been carried out in two-dimensional space, grouping the four principal components two by two, the six graphs being illustrated in **fig. 6 – 11.**

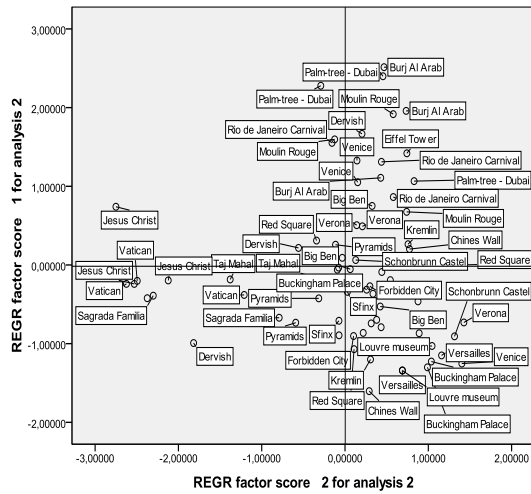


Fig. 6 – Map of tourist objectives in two-dimensional space of 1 and 2

principal components

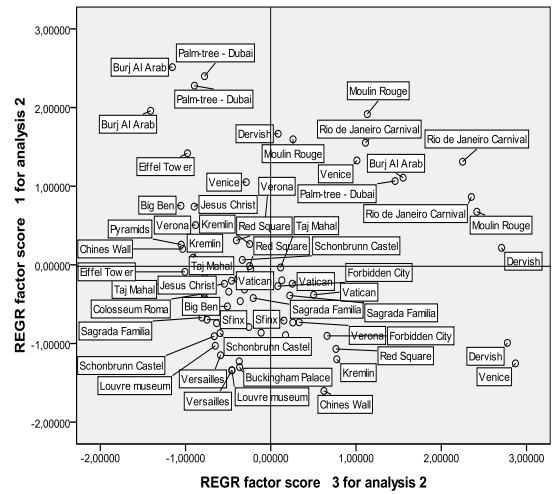


Fig. 7 – Map of tourist objectives in two-dimensional space of principal components

1 and 3

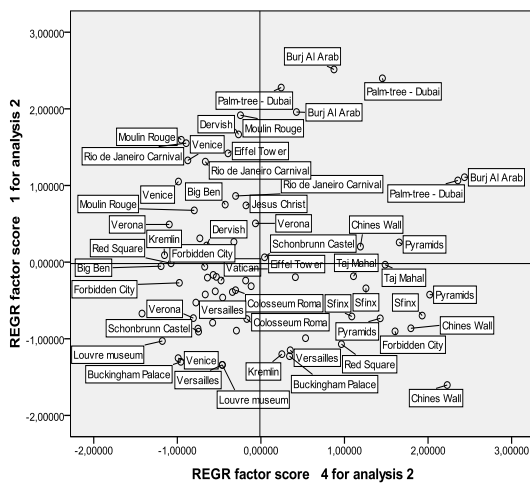


Fig. 8 – Map of tourist objectives in two-dimensional space of principal

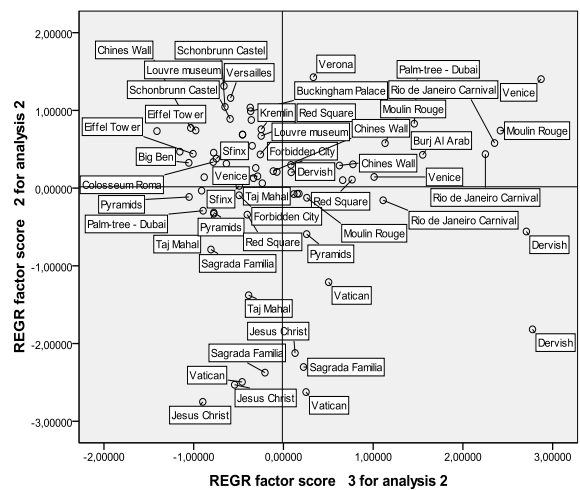


Fig. 9 – Map of tourist objectives in two-dimensional space of

components 1 and 4

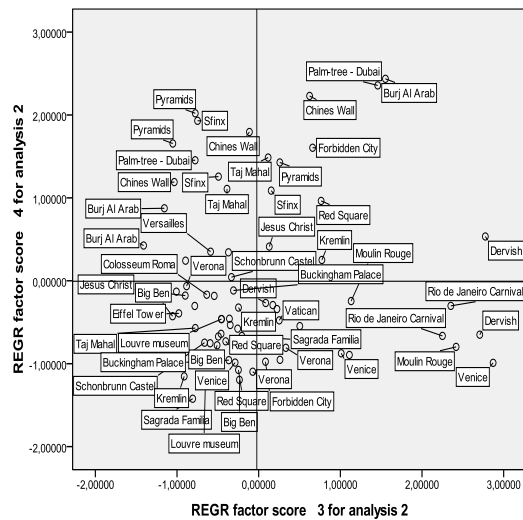


Fig. 10 – Map of tourist objectives in two – dimensional space of principal components 3 and 4

principal components 2 and 3

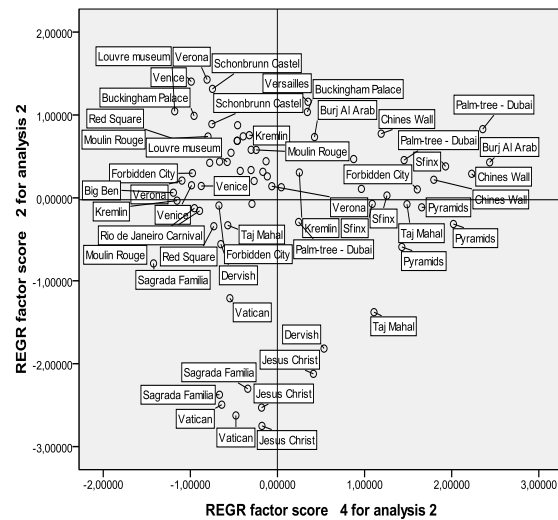


Fig. 11 – Map of tourist objectives in two-dimensional space of principal components 2 and 4

CONCLUSIONS

By applying the **ACP** method, a data reduction has been carried out, replacing the initial point cloud with a low dimension point cloud, for a convenient graphical plotting and to emphasize the features of the 24 tourist objectives of world significance used in the study as regards perception of attributes describing these tourist objectives/destinations, perceivable, subjective, economic, attributes grouped on four principal components:

- **Principal component 1**, named “*history versus present*”

- **Principal component 2**, named “*spirituality – evanescent, earth-born*”
- **Principal component 3**, named “*relaxation versus dynamism*”
- **Principal component 4**, named “*urban versus nature*”

As regards the basic principle of the Kelly grid, the personal construct theory respectively, we can thus notice (based on the correlation matrix analysis) that practicing tourism worldwide has multiple significance and connotations for the youth in Romania, related to the basic activity, tourism respectively. For them, sightseeing some tourist objectives „emblematic” in the world, also meaning *entertainment* and *exoticism, meditation, spirituality, socialization* etc. id est subjectively perceived variables through own experiences and perceptions.

The results of this research are essential to think out a communication policy or strategy of a firm, as they – by combining the advantages of both the quantitative method and the qualitative one – explore and provide subjective perceptions id est marketing variables difficult to measure and especially to explain only in relation to the research qualitative methods.

Correlations obtained from matrix and results of this research thus confirm the Kelly personal construct theory, therefore this tool provides the opportunity of a quantitative, objective transfer of some qualitative, subjective variables. The players of the tourism world market that promote and market tourist packages respectively, that include these tourist objectives contained in this research should approach differently the future potential young tourists considering important aspects related to the perceivable visibility of each of these world tourist destinations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: The financial support from the Grant POSDRU/89/1.5/S/63663 is highly acknowledged.

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Appendix no. 1

	History - entertainment	s Symbolizes history and religion – symbolizes "riot"	Dedicated to spiritual relaxation – dedicated to physical "relaxation"	For "day" tourism – for "night" tourism	Cold colors – strong colors	Exotic landscape – conventional landscape	Religious tourism – relaxation tourism	Gothic architecture focused on details and decorations – modernist architecture	Sanctuary – historic monument	Urban location nature location	Relaxation tourism – event tourism	Relaxation - vitality	extravagance - purity	Dedicated to divinity – dedicated to "common people"	One of the 7 wonders of the world – one of the 7 enjoyments of the world	Magnificence of buildings – magnificence of costumes	For socialization- for meditation	Dynamic - static	Sacre- profane
History - entertainment	1,000	,817	,453	,711	,659	-,666	,350	,458	-,323	-,149	,379	,414	-,433	,238	,546	,545	-,604	-,668	,285
Symbolizes history and religion – symbolizes "riot"	1,000		,585	,693	,653	-,518	,456	,480	-,206	-,122	,370	,465	-,516	,411	,528	,577	-,638	-,641	,409
Dedicated to spiritual relaxation – dedicated to "physical" relaxation			1,000	,441	,506	-,224	,568	,346	,246	-,025	,142	,274	-,603	,376	,538	,328	-,579	-,417	,504
For "day" tourism – for "night" tourism				1,000	,734	-,564	,351	,391	-,166	-,127	,568	,578	-,446	,220	,453	,587	-,678	-,776	,327
Cold colors – strong colors					1,000	-,517	,341	,362	,150	,009	,512	,502	-,494	,237	,517	,615	-,634	-,648	,216
Exotic landscape – conventional landscape						1,000	-,073	-,583	,300	-,321	-,351	-,312	,279	-,157	-,372	-,324	,327	,535	-,061
Religious							1,0	,16	,51	-,06	-,05	,06	-,62	,52	,29	,19	-,59	-,20	,53

tourism – relaxation tourism						00	3	2	5	3	3	2	7	2	8	2	7	2
Gothic architecture focused on details and decorations – modernist architecture						1,000	-0,141	,275	,241	,318	-0,377	,047	,326	,151	-0,490	-0,365	,193	
Sanctuary – historic monument						1,000	,135	-0,176	-0,041	-0,391	,397	-0,026	-0,140	-0,187	,199	,501		
Urban location nature location						1,000	,011	,036	-0,035	,193	-0,244	-0,243	,064	-0,012	-0,033			
Relaxation tourism – event tourism						1,000	,771	-0,276	,085	,274	,601	-0,285	-0,610	,172				
Relaxation - vitality						1,000	-0,262	,254	,264	,608	-0,394	-0,700	,312					
Extravagance - purity						1,000	-0,481	,503	,285	,687	,411	,659						
Dedicated to divinity – dedicated to "common people"						1,000	,173	,184	-0,303	,267	,473							
One of the 7 wonders of the world – one of the 7 enjoyme						1,000	,492	-0,567	-0,471	,342								

[illegible]

How to Create a Successful Social Media Strategy to Serve Customers in Small and Medium-Sized Tourism Businesses in Finland?

Johanna Heinonen, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (Finland)

The Internet has become an important part of people's daily lives. Almost 60 % of Finns use the Internet many times a day and over 40 % of them are registered on some social media platform. Over half of the Finns buy from web shops, most frequently flight tickets, accommodation or other tourism services. Therefore it would be natural that tourism companies would use social media, which are both effective and cheap.

This paper has studied customers' and companies' attitudes towards social media. Two quantitative researches were made online: one involving companies and the other involving customers. Over 400 private persons and over 600 companies from different fields of tourism business answered the questionnaire; 552 companies employed 49 persons or less.

The research revealed some significant differences in social media behaviour among companies of different size. For instance, compared to bigger companies SMEs use social media more often and the variety of social media platforms they use vary more than in bigger companies'. Smaller companies also consider customer service in social media to be more important than sharing information and they follow their social networks more often. However, SMEs are more unaware of their customers' opinions and preferences than bigger companies and they do not know how often their customers visit their social media platforms.

When the answers from companies are perceived in general, the results clearly show the existence of several gaps between companies' and customers' views about the use of social media. For example, companies are not aware of their customers' buying habits in the Internet or their wishes of social media services. In addition, companies do not have proper follow up or measurement systems to know if their social media strategies have been successful or if their customers are satisfied. Furthermore, companies implement their old marketing strategies in social media and do not let customers show their opinions or create the content.

Based on the results one can state that the smaller companies in Finnish tourism sector have understood the benefits of social media better than the bigger ones. Yet, many gaps were found in customer expectations towards social media and in the ways how companies actually use it. Further

study will be needed to discover the true opinions of use of social media and its benefits, after which some recommendations can be given to the companies.

Keywords: social media, customer encounter, tourism sector, SME

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A New Approach to Online Reputation Management in Tourism

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Keywords: Reputation Management, Webnography, Netnography, Social Media, eWOM

Abstract

Through social media applications, consumers have increasingly been participating in information processes. When booking a journey, consumer opinions exchanged via modern media shape the reputation of enterprises like travel agencies and thus have a major impact on the decision to book a journey.

Online reputation management is regarded as a crucial tool to steer these online discourses, with the emphasis on quantitative analyses. However, qualitative methods provide additional insights. In this Work-In-Progress paper, *Computer Assisted Webnography (CAW)* will be presented as a qualitative monitoring method. It is based on the practical modification of ethnographic methods. CAW combines quantitative and qualitative methods and merges both approaches on a virtual working platform, so that the semiotic codes of any given target group can be extracted efficiently and precisely. Then, the results can be used to create individual reputation management strategies.

The basis of this qualitative reputation management is listening to and understanding the customer. One promising base in this context is Grounded Theory. This approach is characterised by a particularly high efficiency, as – in contrast to conventional approaches – the determination of sources, the collection of data, codification, and analysis are expressly not kept separate, but dovetail with each other. Thus, Grounded Theory refers to both the process and the result of the research, and can in this context be regarded as a meta-level approach which refers to the procedures during the entire recording and evaluation process.

In order to identify the virtual public, the systematic search for customer opinions through web-monitoring-tools offers itself. Continuous web-monitoring allows to identify the relevant nodes of networks. The terms to be searched for prior to the analysis results from the criteria relevant for the respective research target and are defined accordingly. In the course of the examination, topics will be gradually extended. In this way, those communication activities which are relevant for the reputation can be determined. Through the increased public exchange of opinions, enterprises might lose control over their reputation. At the same time, however, this new public offers the chance if businesses manage to filter the mass of newly generated information, to evaluate it qualitatively and to use it for their purposes.

Further research measures should test the method presented in this paper and discuss further optimisation options.

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Via which social media do customers prefer to follow companies?

A recent study by Nielsen Company shows a dramatic shift in online activity toward social media (NielsenWire, 2010). People are spending more than a third of their online time “communicating and networking across social networks, blogs, personal email and instant messaging.” This is a 43 percent increase over 2009. Facebook’s CEO reports that the site will have more than 1 billion users in 2011 (Sweeney, 2010). The social media is used by all kinds of organizations. Also, the recent marketing literature gives more attention to the social media research (Hennig-Thurau, T., et al., 2010; Patel, 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010). Still more studies are needed to understand the social media user and to create successful online marketing strategies. Comprehension what kind of information is expected on each social medium must be gained. What is more, knowing which social medium is preferred by the target customers facilitates reaching them successfully. Therefore, a clear description of the social media user is needed. Also, what is the right combination of different social media for a successful online marketing strategy? Which social media to use, what are users’ preferences? Answering the above stated questions is vital for designing a successful online strategy.

This research focuses on analysing the profiles of Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter users. Also, what information the users expect to find on these sites. The contribution of this study is two-fold: the social media users’ profiles and users’ preferences are described. The results are based on an empirical analysis of extensive database collected in the Netherlands, in summer 2010.

The findings of this research give insights into what information is expected on social media sites. This is critical for creating successful marketing strategies using social media. What is more, knowing which social medium the target customers prefer facilitates reaching them successfully.

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Credibility of Online Reviews and Initial Trust; The Roles of Reviewer's Identity and Message Valence

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Abstract

As a word-of-mouth media platform for information sharing in the travel and tourism context, online review sites are an emerging phenomenon which are found to play an increasingly significant role in travelers' decision making. Information available in this type of media is often considered as credible since it is posted by experienced travelers perceived as having no vested interests in what other travelers decide other than the hope that sharing information assists in better decision making. However, despite, or perhaps due to its growing popularity among travelers, information posted on online review sites is increasingly questioned for its credibility since many reviews are suspected as posted by fake customers paid by travel-service providers or other commercial parties. Limited availability of details about the sources or the reviewers on the sites adds to the already existing uncertainty for travelers. The purpose of this study is to answer whether the existence of reviewer's identity affects travelers' perception of the online review credibility and their initial trust to travel services. How the valence of the reviews affects perceptions of information credibility and initial trust is also investigated. An experimental design is developed involving 639 travelers from 31 countries. Results confirm that a review with an identified compared to unidentified source is (1) considered as more credible; and (2) has positive impacts on initial trust towards the travel service and travelers' intentions to make a reservation. In addition, positive reviews with an identified source is perceived as significantly more credible than other type of reviews, while negative reviews with an unidentified source is perceived as less credible than other type of reviews. Managerial implications, limitations, and future directions are also discussed.

Keywords

Online review, credibility, trust, consumer-generated media

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The impact of social media on destination brand: a content analysis of consumers' perceptions of consumer-generated videos versus destination marketer-generated videos.

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of the Internet has altered the environment encompassing the marketing mix. For example, methods of marketing communication have been forced to change with the advent of the Internet and social media. Social media is a powerful source of 'word of mouth'; it can be a positive influence due to satisfied customers or a negative influence due to unsatisfied customers. Traditionally, destination branding was created and generated by destination marketing organizations; this translates into a one-way conversation with the consumer. Today, the destination marketer uses social media to create destination brand identity and image. Social media has made a two-way conversation possible with the consumer participating in the development of a destination brand identity/image.

Destination marketing organizations have recognized the importance of social media and sought ways to market their destinations utilizing the Internet and social media. Currently, a substantial number of consumer-generated videos on destinations exist; they influence consumers' brand perception of a destination. It is important for destination marketers to understand whether consumer-generated videos and contexts deliver the same destination brand identity/image as their marketing organizations have traditionally delivered. If not, how does the destination identity and brand created by the consumer-generated videos impact consumer choice? Currently, there is a lack of research on consumers' perceptions of videos and contexts created by the consumer versus those created by destination marketing organizations. Thus, this study investigated how consumers perceive destination brands created by consumer-generated social media and how it is different from a destination brand created by destination marketing organizations.

Las Vegas, which currently has existing consumers' responses to both consumer-generated videos (CGV) and destination marketer-generated videos (MGV), was selected. The consumers' responses regarding the videos were collected from video clips of Las Vegas on the YouTube website. A content analysis was applied. According to the results, there are differences between CGVs and MGVs in terms of comment topics. The responses on MGV were related to various attractions and activities for Vegas while the responses on CGV were more focused on adult entertainments, negative criticism for Vegas, and evaluations of the video clips themselves. In conclusion, it seems that CGVs don't impact on a destination brand positively. Even though, consumers have a large number of positive responses on CGVs, they still have more negative responses than on MGVs. This study provided insights into destination branding strategies with regards to the roles that social media play in creating destination brand identity and image.

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From little things big things grow? Impacts on travel in remote Australia from the adoption of Internet technologies by Indigenous residents

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Abstract

In the Northern Territory of Australia a third of the population are Indigenous with three quarters living in remote settlements. Until recently access to Internet based technologies was extremely limited, but from 2006 the 'Next G' broadband network was progressively rolled-out to communities. As increasing numbers become 'switched on', Indigenous people are being propelled from having virtually no access to even basic telephony services to full mobile access to Internet technologies. Noted for their highly mobile lifestyles, the inception of globalized technologies and the content they deliver brings into question whether and how technology adoption will alter Indigenous travel patterns. We report on interviews at three very remote Indigenous communities to provide first insights about how nascent technologies are impacting on travel by Indigenous people in the Northern Territory. We find that mobile phones are universally adopted and used every day but to date only in support of existing travel patterns. However, there are early indications from some communities of new challenges and opportunities for Indigenous tourism, both for communities as destinations and for Indigenous people as tourists.

Keywords: Indigenous tourism, Indigenous mobility, Internet technologies, mobile phones, social media

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**Culture and Service-Related Positive Disconfirmations:
An Application of Travel Blog Analysis**

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Abstract

It has long been understood in the service sector that positive disconfirmations of expectations drive customer satisfaction. Using a sample of 334 travel blog postings that describe positive disconfirmations of international hotel guests, this research finds that a traveler's home country culture influences whether or not the positive disconfirmation is service-related. Specifically, travelers from individualistic countries and low power distance countries experience a greater proportion of service-related positive disconfirmations (SRPDs) than those from collective or high power distance nations. From a theoretical perspective, this research extends the emerging body of research that demonstrates the various influences of culture on consumer satisfaction.

Keywords:

blog analysis, collective, cultural distance, international travel, power distance, travel blog

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The Use of Social Media in Marketing Wineries and Winery Tourism Destinations

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Abstract

Social media is one of the fastest growing means of communication for business as well as for personal purposes. Companies can reach customers via the Internet in many ways including YouTube, FaceBook, Twitter and business oriented sites such as LinkedIn etc. As these social media sites have gained members, they have become an essential part of the communications mix along with traditional advertising, personal selling and publicity.

Winery tourism has become big business with all 50 states and a large number of countries seeing winery tourism as a way to promote rural areas (rural tourism) and to integrate several types of tourism such as cultural tourism, agricultural tourism and special interest tourism with other local businesses and attractions. The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which social media is being used to market wineries and winery tourism

destinations. A sample of 75 wineries' web sites in highly developed wine tourism areas such as the Napa Valley was compared to less developed and less well known areas such as Ohio and Missouri. In addition, international wine tourism areas in Italy, France, New Zealand and Australia were examined to explore the extent to which other countries are using social media to promote their winery tourism destinations.

Another aspect of the research was to assess the extent to which social media is used by wineries to integrate the winery tourism experience with other tourism pull factors at the winery and in their geographical areas. The results showed that less than 10% of the wineries sampled used YouTube, 36% used Twitter, less than 10% had a blog and 36% were on Facebook. There was a significant difference between Europe and the other regions with only two European wineries in the sample using Facebook while over 51% of U.S. and 40% of Australian/New Zealand wineries used it. The use of Twitter revealed similar significant differences. While most of the web sites were easy to navigate and gave a good overall impression, less than a quarter had links to tourism organizations in their areas. Other elements examined in the study included whether the wineries offered special events, tours, food, lodging, wine purchase online and whether web sites were multilingual.

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MODELS OF DEPENDANCIES BETWEEN CORPORATE SOCIAL MEDIA (CSM) AND RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)
METHODS APPLIED IN TOURISM OPERATIONS

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Abstract

The paper is focused on two main objectives. ***The first goal*** was to point out the existent dependences between the general economic growth, and tourism corporations and stakeholders, through the corporate media and social responsibility. ***The second goal*** was to carry out an analysis model in main components and a hierarchical classification which has confirmed moreover that the large tourism operators (mainly travel tour-operators) are the cause and explanation of their involvement in the social media principles and methods, in order to reshape the international tourism market in their favour, damaging the small tourism firms, with less power of communication.

The findings presented in this paper are derived from a series of research initiatives conducted in 2010. ***Initially***, a secondary analysis of data associated with several interviews administrated to the corporate tourism operators from Romania and Hungary beeing involved in CSR and CSM activities. ***The second phase*** focused on identifying the number and content of CSR activities realised in the last 3 years and number and content of CSM methods, applied in the same laps of time, in order to improve their visibility and communication among and potential tourists through the travel products. Based on the findings emanating from this second phase of the research program, a semistandardized survey of select outbound tour operators from these countries was undertaken. The focus of the closed-and open-ended

questions employed in this personal interview survey centered on the preferred strategies of these tour operators in promoting and selling through such methods, the awareness and satisfaction levels among outbound tour operators concerning these experiences, tour operator expectations concerning the product requirements needed to compete successfully for European business, and the preferred approaches suggested by tour operators for partnering with other corporations in the field (hotel and restaurant chain). In total, interviews were conducted with 20 select outbound tour operators from these two countries: 15 from Romania and 9 from Hungary.

While the findings emanating from this research cannot be generalized to the broader population of all European tour operators, they do provide insights into the structure and perspectives of many influential tour operators interested in applying CSR and CSM methods. They also offered to the authors' a new understanding of the two concepts: the touroperators are more interested and involved in CSM operations than in CSR activities.

Keywords: Tourism Corporation, Corporate Social Media (CSM), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

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WEB 3.0 IN A HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM CONTEXT

ABSTRACT

This study analyses the current landscape of research on social media in the hospitality and tourism literature. Kotler et al. (2010) argue that marketing is now moving towards the 3.0 era driven by major forces that shape the business environment: the age of participation, the age of globalisation, and the age of creative society. A new technological era is also shaping, Web 3.0, which involves complex cross-community interactions and an intelligent or semantic web (Chaffey, 2009). A systematic approach to the literature review covering social media in hospitality and tourism concluded that researchers in this field are involved with the topic and they employ innovative methodologies and new technologies in the study of social media.

The literature review identified a clusterisation of articles on two thematic trends related to social media - destination marketing and guest satisfaction. A qualitative analysis of selected articles revealed increased interest among the academic community towards the new social media phenomenon.

Finally, the conclusions of the study suggest a future research agenda:

- There are many studies in the hospitality and tourism literature focused on the analysis of travel blogs as a good indicator of consumers' attitudes. Although valuable information can be drawn from blog content, there are more elements of social media to be

analysed. Social networks have a strong impact on consumers in the form of digital word-of-mouth and deserve further investigation.

- Scholars in the hospitality and tourism field show originality and openness in employing innovative methodologies for the study of this technology-driven phenomenon. Studies employing opinion mining and automated monitoring tools show initiative and a step forward made by this field towards the Web 3.0 era.
- Finally, most of the articles reviewed are concerned with the measurement and analysis of customer feedback. This study suggests that more research is needed towards understanding how feedback can be used by businesses to develop successful strategies for social media engagement.

The study encourages researchers in hospitality and tourism to engage with innovative methodologies in the study of the increasingly complex phenomena shaped by Web 3.0 technologies.

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Social Media Adoption by International Hotel Companies: A benchmark and exploration of best practices.

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ABSTRACT

With Social Media rapidly becoming popular among consumers as a source of travel information, this paper presents the first major benchmark of how Social Media is being exploited by the hotel sector. Using observation to assess the presence, visibility, activity and engagement of the top fifty international hotel brands on four major Social Media channels, the study finds that few are making effective use of Social Media. Although many are present on multiple channels, most are practically invisible and also suffer from low levels of activity and engagement. In short, few appear to be leveraging the potential of Social Media, and most are missing out on valuable opportunities to interact with interested customers. Although there are some outlying high performers, such findings hold true irrespective of brand size, star levels or geographical region.

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APPLYING SOCIAL MEDIA METHODS IN THE REGIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT. CHALLENGES FOR THE BLACK SEA COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT

The Black Sea space has an outstanding economic potential that overcomes the physical link secured by the waterway for merchandise transport between Western, Central and South Europe (so named Silk Road). **The paper targets** on the role played by the social media in the valorisation of the urban and cultural heritage in the countries that border the Black Sea (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine).

All efforts made to analyze the tourism activity in the countries mentioned above are justified by the tremendous potential due to the natural and cultural resources that are largely miscellaneous and of high quality and by the scarcity of information about them. Those features turn the listed countries into attractive destinations for the tourists, only if the social media methods will replace well enough the missing, yet, of other mobility means: railways, roads and high roads, air plane connections. Under these conditions, to be at the front of the line, a tourism agent must be able to impress the general public and what better way to do this than by applying non-traditional selling steps -social media methods (primarily internet or cellular phone based applications and tools to share information, websites, like Facebook and Twitter; as well as bookmarking sites like Digg or Reddit). Therefore, ***the authors' interest focused on two issues:***

- a. the existent tourism status quo in those countries, as well as
- b. to the chance given by the social media that this tourism destination become better known on the international tourism markets.

The paper brings an original contribution by integrating economic, social and environmental aspects manifesting in the Black Sea space in the general context of international cooperation and of the transformation processes brought by European Union enlargement and international economic crisis.

Given the exploratory nature of this research, inductive social science research techniques were employed.

Qualitative research methods where preferred because no other investigation of this nature had previously been undertaken, and qualitative methods particularly oriented toward exploration and discovery of social phenomena through the use of inductive processes.

Analysis of the data revealed that only a few respondents claimed the tourism heritage in their country or city, they came from all walks of life (professional status, official position in tourism infrastructure, authority position, age, gender). The authorities stress factors such as the lack of security, the lack of salubrity, and the general poor state of the social media methods. They consider that “That part of Europe is not yet ready to receive tourists and even risks giving a negative image that would stigmatize one particular culture, country, and city!”

KEYWORDS: *Black Sea Countries, Black Sea Tourism, Social Media Methods*